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Carib-French Dictionary
(Dictionaire Caraibe-Francais)

By Raymond Breton

1665
Gilles Bouquet

Translated from the French by Marshall McKusick
and Pierre Verin

Human Relations Area Files

1968

[Title Page]

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Father Raymond Breton's Observations of the Island Carib

A Compilation of Ethnographic Notes

Taken from Breton's Carib-French Dictionary

Published in 1665

Organized and Translated by
Marshall McKusick and Pierre Verin

[p.i]

1. Origins

101 The true name of these Island Caribs is Callínago. These are the cannibals and man-eaters about whom the Spanish complained so much that they were untameable and that they devoured such prodigious numbers of them and their allies. For this is what the Spanish say in their books. However, I do not wish to have them slandered any more, for I have no grounds to complain about their cruelty. On the contrary I will freely attest their mildness towards me, although it is a sweet cruelty to be chewed, devoured, and torn to pieces in the service of God. The women call them Callíponam. [105]

Caribs of South America are called Galíbi. I have finally learned from captains on the island of Dominica that the words Galíbi and Carib were names that the Europeans had given them. Their true name was Callínago although they designated themselves only with the words oubaóbanum and balouébonum: that is to say either 'from the islands' 103 and 'from the continent.' The Island Caribs were Galibis from South America who branched off in order to conquer the islands. The captain who led them was small in size but great in courage. He did not eat much and drank even less. He exterminated all the native inhabitants, but kept the women, who have always retained something of their language in order to perpetuate the memory of these conquests. He made them carry the heads of his enemies into the caves among the rocks which are at the edge of the sea, and the French have found these. This was done in order that fathers could show them to their children and they successively to their posterity. They told me that they had had kings, and that the word abouyou was the name of those who carried them on their shoulders. The Caribs who had their carbet [men's house] at the foot of Soufrière on Dominica beyond d'Amichon were descended from them. But I did not ask them if the dynasty had begun with this captain who had conquered the islands nor when these kings had ceased to rule. [228]

[107] 224 The Caribs do not use gayac as a remedy for either yaws or the great pox. When they make forked posts of gayac wood to support their houses they say they make it for themselves and their descendants. Actually this wood seems indestructible. For their children they make

224 For their children they make
[Cx] grotesque dolls out of it[1] which are called mánlira, the same name as the wood. I have taken some of these dolls out from under rocks where they had been hidden by the savages who had been exterminated. The Caribs did not dare to look at these because of superstition. These dolls were just as beautiful as if they had been newly made. I believe this wood sinks to the bottom of water like a stone. [354]

[101] Caribs who come from other islands are also people of this nation. [310]

2. Religious Beliefs

754 The Caribs explain the causes of all their misfortunes as due to
776 the gods of the boyes [shamans], or due to maboyas [evil spirits], or due to sorcerers. This is because the first are more feared than loved, and the second are hated. They often revenge themselves, sometimes mistakenly and very crudely, on those whom they believe to be the third and who are nothing less than sorcerers. I have seen an old
[Cx] man who was a little bald and who complained he had been bewitched -- as if people only became bald in this way. [271]

752 The boye sings to cause his gods to descend. When the Caribs
776 go to war, or when some are sick, they summon a boye. An offering is prepared and placed at the back of the hut which is always circular. A hammock is hung. The audience lines up along the side. The boye arrives, sometimes accompanied by a second boye, and begins to sing. One of the two boyes throws up tobacco smoke instead of incense, and by this means he causes his false god to descend. I have distinctly heard him when he falls like a sack of flour, but I have not heard the sound people say he makes with his fingers. The boye gives the god the hammock to sit in, and presents him the offering to eat and drink. This spirit of the darkness hates light and orders the fire to be smothered and all the openings through which daylight may pass to be filled, although the ceremony is always done at night. Once I attempted to enter with a fire brand in order to prevent this abomination from occurring, but the women stopped me. Many other times when I was walking around the place I heard a voice like "John in the Vineyard," which made me believe that there was trickery. I decided to find out the real facts and approached the spot without anyone's noticing me,

[1] [i.e., of gayac wood -- Analyst]

wearing my vestment and with the blessed sacrament in my hand. I brought my small ciborium filled with consecrated wafers. I used these wafers for my own communion at the beginning of each day, which I took in secret, for I was alone among them and I dared not say a mass in front of them. When I was close I heard their false goddess fall down on her back -- for since this boye was a woman her god had the form of a woman. She wept, screamed, and had a fit of anger for a quarter of an hour while I was there. The Caribs who heard it as I did were so dismayed that they did not know what to do. I left the scene, God not having inspired me to do more; and I was absolutely certain that this was a true devil and that the boye woman was a true magician. I never attempted to hear nor to write down her song and her devil's pact. After my departure this arrogant spirit in her anger shouted (speaking of me), "Quickly, tie him up quickly for he may escape me! I want to eat his head, his shoulders, his feet, and even his excrement. I want to crush him. I want to reduce him to mush. I want to swallow him." The Caribs, afterwards, often quoted these words to me, imitating the god's fury and laughing about it. [216]

A boye referring to another whom he has made a boye like himself says "I have given him a god." I do not know if the boye gives a a god immediately to the other one, or if upon making his devil appear, he makes a pact with him to give a god to the other man. I have not been curious to know this information. But I well know that they made Charlotte, the daughter of Captain Baron, fast for a long time in order to become a boye. I impeded this proceeding because I knew that she was about to turn Christian. For this reason I ordered a person who was with me to say his beads every day to keep her from becoming a boye. This plan succeeded so completely that neither the boye nor his devil was able to have any power over her. [286]

There is in the belief of the Caribs as much difference between ichéiri [guardian spirit] and maboya as there is among us between God
[782] and the devil. It is unknown among them to offer sacrifices to maboya, although in truth both gods are real devils, and one who sacrifices to ichéiri sacrifices to the devil. The boyes make other people boyes. A person who wishes to become a boye fasts, and afterwards the boye calls

756 776 forth his false god who gives the new boye a god of his own. If the new boye is a man, his god is a man. If the new boye is a woman, her god is a goddess, or to be more exact a devil who reveals itself or is heard as a woman. They never say that this god is the god of the savages, but rather it is the god of such and such a boye. They don't know how to pray to him because they don't even have the word [782] for prayer in their language. However, they never have a drinking party without making an offering either because they believe that having called the gods, they will come by this means, or because they believe that the gods multiply their manioc. It is necessary to present them with the first fruits. Finally it could be that they fear them. These gods have numerous offspring and these children have children. These all come to drink the offerings. One of these gods says that he was formerly an Arawak, another says he was from a different nation. Some of them are young and some old, some are men and others women. According to what they say, they cause storms and give evils such as gout which cannot be cured by the ordinary Carib. They give orders to the boyes telling them which herbs to pick to remedy these ills, and these gods are considered by the Caribs to be very powerful. [283]

The following is the boldest deception of the boyes. When they are called to cure some swelling which has developed on the knees or another joint, they suck the spot and draw the evil out by sucking -- that is what they say. Sometimes they spit out stones, tips of arrows or ray tails, etc. The boye invents the story that the god of another boye has shot the arrow into the sick person and caused the affliction. The patient firmly believes this, as do all others who think they have been cured by this means. If they have some nice caracoli ornament they are expected to give it to the boye as a reward for such a crude and stupid invention. [167]

776 782 When the boye causes his god, or more exactly his devil, to descend, a wicker table loaded with cassava is placed as an offering. This is done when the boye asks for remedies. An offering is also made when the sick person on whom the god has descended is cured by this means. An offering is made to the god because it is believed that he has given health or made the manioc grow. This is a sacrifice or an act of idolatry. [58, 83]

After the god of a boye has drunk well he says "I am drunk, much hindered, and embarrassed." When a sacrifice is offered to him he calls his companions. They drink up the contents of all of the large pots, or at least pretend to do so. When they wish to leave, they practice a deception upon the hearing of the assembly. They tip their calabash drinking cups back into the large pots, and according to the sound it makes you might think that the pots are empty. However, the next morning these same pots are full which seems to the Caribs to be a great miracle. The old men and the most important among them gather to drink it. But the false gods have ordered it to be drunk upon an empty stomach, and also under the condition that they have not touched their wives during the night. You might judge it to be a monkey trick of the devil to imitate our sacrament. [148]

The Caribs believe that the moon is a man, and that once upon a time the moon saw a girl while she was asleep and he made her pregnant. This obliged the mother to give the girl a person to watch over her. The guardian surprised the moon one night and blackened him with genipap, in order to recognize the culprit. The Caribs say this is the reason for the spots on the moon which appear today. The child born from the girl was named Hiàli, and he later laid the first foundations of the Carib nation. The hummingbird was chosen to carry Hiàli to his father, and having faithfully performed its task, it obtained as a reward a beautiful crest for its head and its feathers were turned many colors. [293] The boyes have enough temerity to claim that they fly up to the moon in the heavens. One day a boye told me about his trip there. I recognized his foolishness when he said the moon looked like open rocks with trickling water everywhere. It is even sometimes said that their false gods raise them visibly and that the roof of the house opens itself to let them through it. The simple people do not understand that this is done by magic, and so they say with great admiration "he has wings." [234] The false gods address the Caribs as hueyou-ago in order to flatter them. These false gods do not call them "under the moon" but rather "over the sun," if I may express myself in this way. [263]

The Caribs have never heard about Pythagorus, but nevertheless they seem to be imbued with the idea of metempsychosis, for they have an expression which means "men do not become stones." [189] They do not know what it is to pray to God, although they believe it to be

782 right to do it. They apologize for not having been accustomed to doing it, and they have borrowed our word for prayer, apourieroutoni, but have added the ending of their verb and noun. [433] When
825 lizards, animals, or birds accidentally perch on their houses or near by, as if they were tame, they do not dare to touch them. They say that these are birds which belong to the gods of the boyes, and if the Caribs killed these animals the gods would kill them in turn. [341]

776 The maboyas are evil spirits. The Caribs have no knowledge of the creation nor of the end of the world, nor of angels nor devils. They fear the maboyas, however, and the oumécou about whom they have told me stories which I consider fables. When I tried to make them understand who the devil was, I called him maboya in order that they would firmly believe what I told them, since they have so much hatred for maboyas. [424]

000 It has been wrongly said that two Caribs taken to France had renounced their faith. One of these obtained permission to visit his parents and he died there a little while after his return. The other one requested me to live near him until his death, offering to feed me and to have a chapel built for me. [360]

961 If death is terrible to other men, I have seen that among the Caribs it seems more than terrible. It is so among those who have a conscience filled with remorse over the evil that they know they have done. For, believing in the immortality of the soul, they are fearful of the punishments which might confront them according to their faults. No one can console them at this time. They die with strange grieving and with bitterness of heart. As soon as they are dead, they
964 are painted red, their hair is arranged, and they are wrapped in a good cotton hammock -- if they are important. They then make a round hole in the middle of the house at a depth suitable to the posture that they have given them, which is the posture they had in the womb of their mother. They lower them into the hole, placing them on a plank which has been put there and cover them with another on which they throw the dirt. They shed tears and sing sadly of their sorrow and their regret. This continues late at night and at dawn for a number of days. They don't forget the custom of putting bread and wine upon the grave, nor that of maintaining a fire around the grave for a
965 long time. At the end of a year they return to weep, and lifting up the planks they throw earth on the consumed corpse. They trample down the earth and drink the rest of the day and night. Sometimes they move out of their houses and habitations, as I have seen them do after the death of their captain, Henri Comte. [237]

3. Feasts and Manners

572 The word compere [literally: pal] is in usage in all of the
177 islands where there are Caribs -- among the French when they trade with their Carib friends, and among the Caribs when they speak in French to those with whom they have become friends. A Frenchman gives his name to a Carib and the Carib gives his name to the Frenchman. Even if he does not give such a man his trade, at least he prefers him to others, and this does not fail to give him some profit. [320]

422 The Caribs have so few belongings that they are able to carry all of them with them, without having any desire to acquire more.
437 Thus when the Caribs have a tortoise which they want to exchange for a knife, they will not trade it if you should offer them two axes for it. The reason is that they have a need for the knife, although the axes are worth more. Our own possessions, although high-priced and scarce, would have no value among them. [291] The Caribs do not use terms for buying and selling. They ask without haggling and one gives the article to them for that which is offered without difficulty. [312]

511 The Caribs cannot fail to rank as church paupers, and to have the love of Jesus Christ, and to be accepted by the Kingdom of Heaven. For they possess neither gold nor silver and they have neither bag nor wallet, nor coat nor staff, and they do not even have the desire to obtain them. A hut to protect them from the elements satisfies their ambition. Tomali [tamale?] is their stew, and crabs are the
445 most delicate food that they have. Calabashes serve them for crockery, and baskets serve as chests. Earthen pots are used as kettles and cauldrons. When they change islands and when they go to another
574 [244] carbet, drink and food are not refused them. They reciprocate equally to others in a similar situation, provided that the others do not arrive too late, for they save nothing for the following day. [316] The Caribs ask fearlessly, and give freely, when they have something. [273]

574 The Caribs have their accustomed civilities. One particular man
576 is in charge of receiving those who visit. He makes ready a hammock for them if they are important, or a stool if they are common, and has them sit. He summons a woman who carries to the guest a small wicker table which is laden with cassava and other things and it is set in front of him. Then the man in charge says, "My compere, this is for you to eat." The visitor replies with a thank you. If the cassava is unfolded

574 it signifies that all of it is intended for him, but if it is folded double
576 he understands that he should only eat at his discretion and should leave the rest. Others come over even if they have just finished their meal, and they share what they have brought. Because of friendship they eat again. The only trouble I had with them was when I refused to eat a second time. However, after I had explained to them our way of life they were no longer offended. I have not noticed
[274] that they have particular words for breakfast, dinner, and supper, although they eat meals regularly. [214]

When a Carib arrives at a carbet there is a man who is responsible for giving him a good reception. He shows the guest to a hammock, has food and drink carried to him, and entertains him. At the end of the meal the host goes to everyone and invites all to come and greet the visitor. The older men greet him first, and all the others after that, and the visitor responds. After this greeting they talk with him, for no one approaches him or interrupts him while he is eating. When the guest is ready to leave he goes before everyone present and says good-by to each one, and the others reply. [345]

When a captain has a drinking party or a banquet he choses a man who goes from carbet to carbet where he is well entertained, and when this man leaves he steps before his hosts and invites them to assemble and requests them to come to the feast. [266]

The boutámon is a small table which is covered with cassava and some meat, and which is presented to a visitor. [94] "To the health of my friend," replies the one for whom a toast has been given. One toast is not enough and a supplement is necessary, as they say in the islands. [353]

576 "Why does he call me my mother? I called him my father -- at least if he did not call me daughter he should call me sister." The Caribs don't call each other Mr. or Miss, etc. If they call you "father" you should reply "my son." Once, meeting Henri Comte, I said "Good morning my captain." Both he and the people with him laughed at me for a long time because of this greeting which is not customary among them. [97]

574 "Did you come?" This is the greeting that the women give each
576 other when they arrive in a house where there is one of their relatives or acquaintances whom they visit directly at their house. A seat is offered to them, and if they are old or well-liked they are offered a bed. Food and drink are presented. Nevertheless, they do not receive

574 576 the civilities which it is customary to render to men. If someone else greets them they respond with the women's greeting. [155]

When Caribs meet after a long period of absence from each other, they embrace each other impelled by reasons of joy or sadness. [516] Mutually resting their head on the shoulder of the other, each rests one knee on the ground. They begin a sad chant and go so far as to weep and sob, even continuing to weep for a long time after. This is especially true when the visitor arrives during a drinking party as I have seen happen at the arrival of a Balibi. [233]

302 When the Caribs go to feasts their women paint them red and wash their faces and wipe them. Then the women spread their fingers which are reddened with paint and press them on their husband's faces, which disguises their features so well that one has difficulty recognizing them. [298]

293 The skin of the jaguar has short, red hair. All the Caribs who have been to South America have such a skin. When they come to their feasts each carries his own in ostentation trailing it ten or twelve feet behind him, with the claws of the Mansfénix hawk arranged on two sticks across their backs. They believe that this communicates to them courage and valor. When they are gashed with the teeth of 752 an agouti and are bleeding they grind up the jaguar skin and rub the powder on the wound. This heals the wound very well without any inflammation or boils, even when they have been previously rubbed with pepper and pimento. [100]

785 I have seen young men at feasts stand in the middle of the carbet with their hands upon their heads allowing anyone to beat them with arrows, similar to blows given with the flat of a sword. I have seen others just after the greater part of their bodies had been gashed, who allowed people to rub them all over with the body of a Mansfénix together with a great deal of pepper which had been crushed between two rocks. God knows that they become hot after that. Others, not at the time of these drinking parties, stood up in the same place, and old women beat them with pineapples leaves which they hold by the points. With the spines they scratch them by dragging them across their bodies, for the pineapple leaves are like saws except that the spines are more treacherously sharp and pointed. All of this is designated by the term "He has passed by the lances." [132]

796 There are few Caribs who have women and children who do not participate in the elétoüac feast, for it is one of their most solemn. It sometimes takes four months to prepare for it. The hair of the women and children is shaved close to their temples. At this feast they begin to feed fish to their small children. They do not permit their children to eat fish for a long time, because of the fish bones and also because fish causes colic and stomach cramps. The elders and the married men bring birds of prey. The children bring in little birds, and the married men bring big and full grown birds that they have taken from their nests and reared for this ceremony. The captain is invited to perform. He takes the birds and beats the heads of the birds against the heads of the performers so that they are bloody. He gashes both the children and the older men. He puts the children into their hammocks where they must remain without eating, and they must keep the position which he has given them. If they do not remain in this position it is believed that they will become hunch-backed or deformed according to the new position they might take. The birds of the married men are crushed if they have had children or have killed some Arawaks. With a quantity of black pepper or pimento, they rub their wounds. You can imagine how cold they are! In order to restore them they are given the heart of their bird to eat, but nothing more. Fearing that this may cause some indigestion, the [278] next morning they go to a drinking pot full of a tobacco liquid and drink long drafts of it which makes them vomit everything. [202]

[85] They have a feast in which the smallest children begin to eat fish. The older children have their ears pierced and their hair cut. [608] [385] The ioubénene is the man who incises them at their feasts and [285] is considered as their godfather. [191] There are certain people who are asked to make small wicker tables, baskets carried on the back, and other utensils necessary for the feast called elétoüac. [317]

301 Among all the guests there are six or eight who rub their bodies with elemi gum that is still fresh from the tree. They glue on small feathers and down from the bird called Festu en Queue. They crown their heads with long feathers of the Aras [macaw?] bird. Then they 535 273 dance two by two around the carbet. One extends his right arm on the shoulders of another who in turn passes his left arm around the neck of his companion. The others follow in a like manner. Dancing two by two, they arrive at the place where there are big calabashes full

536 of ouicou [kind of beer]. They must drink it to the last drop, even
273 if they are ready to burst. I have seen some almost choke, become pale and uncertain, and a Carib embraced them from behind to relieve them. He tightened their stomachs so hard that they vomited a part of it, but this was only to make room for more ouicou. [203]

[533] The Carib women only sing when they are drunk. They usually sing only one song, and this is sung so badly that we should weep
635 rather than laugh. When the women attempt to dance they are in no danger of getting pleurisy because they do not exert themselves jumping. The young people, married and unmarried, sometimes join together and pass entire nights in dancing, without daring to stop out of superstitious motivations. A woman takes a calabash full of peas or pebbles which rattle, and all dance to the cadence of this sound. Now and then they yell such sharp cries that it is startling. It is worse when the men perform a dance after having eaten Arawak. They make much more noise. A man carries a calabash at the end of a long pole and marching in front he makes it rattle. All the others follow him. Sometimes they are in a line and sometimes in a circle, in motion and not holding hands. At the same time they all have their left hand on their head and their right hand on their buttocks. Next, the right moves to their head and their left hand moves to their buttocks, and this continues. Joined with these movements is shuffling with their feet together which is very painful, yet they never jump or leave their position. [269]

[513] For their feasts they have twelve to fifteen large pots which hold as much as the same number of our casks would hold when filled with
521 drink. [119] When they wrestle the Caribs do not use body holds but only hold each other by the arm above the elbow. They give each other such jerks that one of the wrestlers, one day in my presence, was thrown to the ground by his adversary and stayed there more than a quarter of an hour before he regained consciousness. This exercise is common among them but only at their drinking parties. [368]

346 When a pirogue is made people are asked to help drag it down from the mountain to the sea. They are invited to the feast which follows. In this country if there is no feast, there is no work party. [144]

241 To clear land for a garden the Caribs have work parties. They cut off branches, pile up wood and leaves, and burn off the land in order to prepare it for planting. These work parties are organized in the following way. They have a drinking party in which all the strong men are requested to join in the work. Later that morning they fell a square patch of wood 100 to 200 feet on a side. The wood is knocked on the ground in disorder. They drink the rest of the day and the following night as payment. Six weeks later they set fire to the field at noon when the breeze blows. They set the fire on the side of the field to the wind, and the greater part of the refuse is burned. Then they hold another drinking party in order to pick up and complete what is left to be done. They hold work parties also in other situations and replace by this means the absence of servants and laborers which are unknown among them. [86] At their feasts they eat as little as they drink much. [71]

574 When the Caribs have completed their tasks on a work party they have a drinking party where drink is served by the man who has sent for them. When they have drunk everything they go to their host and say "My friend, I leave. I have drunk all the drink which you have prepared in return for my labor. Good-by." [362]

273 [584] The Caribs do not prevent either men or women from becoming drunk. But they do not allow men to seduce other men's wives, while these women are drunk. [319]

The Caribs are so vile in their drunkenness that when they feel themselves to be too full they turn their head aside and often even without leaving their place in the company, they put their fingers into their mouths to bring up everything they had swallowed. [223]

629 Vengeance rules among the Caribs, but it is only carried out at their drinking parties. The offended person is careful to remain sober in order to better the success of his plan. He is not punished for his deed if he has done it to avenge the death of one of his relatives. But if he has unjustly killed a man, it will not fail to pass that sooner or later the relatives of the dead man will put him to death, unless the murderer quickly flees to another island. [370]

4. Warfare

726 The Caribs never go to war openly against their enemies, but only attack them by surprise. Nevertheless, they make great preparations, assembling many pirogues and canoes. They only take one woman into each boat to comb their hair and paint them, as well as to prepare their food. Finally they arrive at the place agreed upon. If they are discovered they utter cries which terrify everyone, and they kill all whom they chance to meet. They let loose a flight of arrows to which burning cotton is fastened and set fire to everything.
727 Three hours later they retire until they plan some new enterprise. They kill their prisoners with blows of clubs. If some of the prisoners are women they take them home and give them to the old men as wives and slaves. If they capture male children they regard them as slaves, but if the males are older they force them to fast, because the Caribs do not like to eat fat, and then they kill them. [375]

721 [637] The Caribs during their drinking parties, which sometimes last two or three days, make speeches to each other about the great exploits of their ancestors. This is to arouse their spirits and make them fight more bravely against their enemies. The women and the young [91] people do not understand this language. Only in the speeches which they make during the work parties, do they use a style which although very elaborate, is nevertheless intelligible to all. [376] All their harangues, which they make so frequently, are only war speeches to
726 excite themselves against their enemies. Even the human flesh they eat at this time is for this same purpose, because they eat it in such small quantities. However, I think that when they have it in large quantities they eat all they can, because I heard it said here that when they killed three of our missionaries at Puerto Rico they smoked them. But during the meal they became so greatly disgusted that they dared not look at them. [222]

When they are going to eat an Arawak there is singing, dancing, and rejoicing. At the beginning of my stay in Dominica, my host, Captain Baron, had killed and brought back an Arawak from South America. He had a great drinking party and invited anyone who wished to come. He gave each woman a part of the Arawak to cook in her own pot so that she could eat it with her husband and family who were in the assembly. This they did with great enjoyment during the day. After having drunk and been entertained in their

266 harangues concerning their valor, as night fell they were reeling and their eyes rolled in their heads. They began to sing and dance and howled with such fury and hatred that I was completely terrified. [216]

If there is anything capable of saddening the Caribs it would be not being able to kill an Arawak, because they can neither become [554] captains nor be respected except by this feat towards which all their *thoughts are directed and channeled.* [317] The Arawaks are their chief enemies towards whom they are relentless and for whom they want to be living tombs (i.e. whom they want to eat alive). I think that when they catch them they do not change their attitude; they enslave only the women and children. [223] They call Christians 291 disguised enemies because our clothes are not so well-fitting and natural as their own, for they are as naked as the hand. All of them are naked, men and women, old and young, without being embarrassed by their shameful parts which are no better concealed than the rest of them. [223] When they see a sailing ship off Marie-Galante they utter a loud, high-pitched scream to warn those who are in the carbet. [125]

411 The boutou is the club of the Caribs which serves them as a sword. It varies in length according to the man who carries it. If he is a captain he carries a very thick and long one, and if he is an old man it is of lesser size, and so forth. The wood of which it is made is so hard and so heavy that it sinks in water like iron. Judge what kind of a wound it makes when a man is struck on the head by a powerful Carib. However, I have seen one who was struck but not killed, and having recovered he became insane. [94] The Caribs bring large oyster shells from South America which they crush into a powder and fill the carvings on their clubs. I don't know what ingredient they mix with it to make it hold fast. [436] The clubs have small carvings [531] which are not displeasing. [267] Men fasten stones, as long as sharpening stones, at the end of their clubs and here they rattle, making a sound like fighting crickets. [445]

5. Settlements and Boats

361 The Caribs have only a very small clearing at the place where they live, which is a place for the carbet and some smaller houses around it. This is planned so that the Europeans will not be able to know about them or capture them by surprise. It is for the same reason that the greater part of them are established on the windward side of the island, because here the waves are rough and terrain is high and it is difficult to gain access to it. Nevertheless, they are always near rivers because they would not be able to forego water either for drinking or for bathing. [279] There is a yard between the carbet and the other houses. Each one cleans the area of it in front of his own house. After supper they gather and talk around the fire, which they make if the evening is cool, until they say to each other "let us go in and sleep." On the next day they do not complain about the evening dew and they have not caught colds. [85] They [364] take away fishbones, peels, and their refuse from the tables, and throw them far away, because such things breed chiggers. [303]

344 "We have to wrap cassava in thick leaves in the middle of the carbet." The carbet is the room, market place, work shop, storage place, dining hall, and dormitory, and the community house of the Caribs. It is almost like an oval cradle. Its height [sic] is sixty feet and its width is twenty feet. It is built plainly, but with all the care and utility one might imagine. The entrances are toward the center of the house, and are four diametrically opposed holes. These entrance holes are only four feet high. There are no other doors or windows, and there are no pegs or nails. There is only one storey and no chambers. There are no divisions nor hindrances inside the carbet which would impede 12 people walking side by side in a row. At the height of 7 feet there are beams 10 feet long to hang 100 to 120 cotton [513] hammocks, where the Caribs rest peacefully in perfect harmony without quarrels or noise. Women rarely enter this house except to serve the men. [476]

342 The Caribs have thatched houses (mánna) built a little like those of our peasants except that the roof is made of the upper part of reeds or of palmetto leaves which extend to the ground. They are oval in shape and lack windows entirely. In place of a door there is only a

342 hole through which they are only able to enter by stooping. The inside is never encumbered by beams and forked posts to support the house. Rooms, entrance hall, and plank floor are also absent. [354]

342 The cachíbou is a very smooth leaf, long as the arm and more
324 than a foot wide, and it is quite rigid. The Caribs cut them and expose them to the sun, which causes them to harden. Next they fold them at the middle and arrange them over a reed split in two, overlapping every four inches. They attach them with mahot or some cords on the lath. This is their substitute for roof tile. This covering lasts them almost two years. It is beautiful from within, for you would assume it had been painted. This leaf also serves as their parasol, and it is used in their baskets, which are always double, being placed between the two layers to keep water from penetrating.

342 [97] The boulénum are two big beams of wood on the inside of the roof. The cross rafters are fastened to them. The upper part of the house rests on notches made in these beams, which support the whole building. There are neither posts nor forks in the middle of the house so that one may walk about inside as in a market place, easily eight or ten men abreast. [90] Tabonítali are two little sticks which are tied together and which hold up two opposing rafters. The half reeds are on the outside. This tightens the leaves so that the wind will not blow them away. [115] The ticoúloubi are the poles which are fitted lengthwise in the pirogue and support the planks on which one sits. They are also the encircling roof supports in the carbet. [461] With the top of the manboúlou reed they cover the roofs of their houses. [351] The Caribs use monochíali leaves to cover their houses. The French call these reeds ox tongues. [361]

There are old carbets which have only small forked posts and poles left and some banana leaves on them as a protection against the heat of the sun. [444] When they are working high in the mountains and are not able to return the same day they say, "I sleep in my garden." [54] "Enclose us, surround us with palissades for fear of our enemies." [187]

484 When the Caribs go to some other islands they know the camping places. They ordinarily choose locations where there is material for sheds, so they can set them up more easily, and where there are crabs
326 or reefs. At these places game and fish are the most abundant and the easiest to obtain. [280] When the Caribs camp they set up some

422 ajoupa or sheds, which they cover with leaves, and they sleep there. Most of them tie up their hammocks to a couple of trees and sleep without further ceremony. Unfortunately when they are in the woods [32] or along the seashore the mosquitos wake them up with their humming, and if this is not sufficient, they sting them so terribly that one must be an unfeeling fellow not to be bothered by them. [88]

286 352 The Caribs cut four big pieces of wood which are round and smooth. They lean and attach two of these to the purlins of the house. The other two are firmly bound crosswise over the first ones. One of these is above and the other is below, in proportion to the size of the hammock they wish to make. Around this frame women pass their cotton thread which they handle well, although they don't exert themselves too much. They leave half a foot unwoven at both extremities and divide this unwoven part into small groups of (looped) threads. They tie a thin cord, called ébenebou, at the first group of looped threads. This cord is extended (out from the threads) to the length of the arm and then is bent back and passed through the second bundle of looped threads (thereby forming a large loop). From the second bundle this same cord is extended outwards a similar distance and is bent back and passed through the third bundle of looped threads, and similar loops are made up to the last bundle of threads (where the ébenebou cord is tied). A thicker cord is passed through the tops of these large loops (which are thereby drawn together), and this is the cord by which they suspend the hammock wherever it will 513 be hung. This hammock is a protection against snakes, ants, and other dangerous pests. The Caribs make a fire underneath at night to protect themselves from mosquitos and cool air. I have seen some Frenchmen who put mattresses on these hammocks to sleep as in Europe, always in line with the long dimension. This is different from the Caribs who sleep across the shorter dimension (in line with the two suspended ends), and use half of the breadth as a covering. [192]

491 Among the Caribs a bridge is a plank of wood or a felled tree across a brook. They do not use anything to bridge the large rivers, and they either become wet or cross over them in a small canoe. [361]

396 The Caribs hollow out and make a small canoe from a tree called by the French Holland cheese, because the axe cuts it like cheese. These canoes are used either when they are grating manioc or to go to some neighboring place. It rots immediately if left on the ground, but when it is soaked in water it lasts a sufficiently long time if it is taken out and set to dry. [175]

"I have enlarged my canoe." When the log is hollowed out they turn the opening downward and make a fire beneath it. This makes the opening larger. Then they force a stout stick across it and spread the sides. They stop when it is the right size. [115]

Pirogues, called canaoa, are the galleons of the Caribs. They are 60 feet long more or less. They are raised on the sides with planks. They hold crews of fifty to sixty men and even more. The distance between gunwales in the middle is eight to ten feet, and they have two very large and wide sails. They travel 250 to 300 leagues on the sea, and go as far as Cayenne and Surinam to join the Galibis who are their allies, either to barter their goods and bring back other kinds, or to form an army to attack the Arawaks who are their enemies. [108] They carry grated flour in bundles in their canoes. When they arrive at a place they press it and cook it. It is sometimes very sour when it is old. [264]

The French have learned from the Caribs how to dig out logs and make canoes, but they did not learn how to paddle and steer them, nor did they learn how to jump into the sea to right them when they have capsized. The Caribs are not afraid of capsizing, of wetting their clothes, or of losing everything and drowning. But the French for the most part are afraid of all these things, and do not wish to lose all their belongings from the canoe or risk their lives, for they have seen fatal accidents happen very often. [331]

In the islands worms pierce the hulls of boats so that after two years it is necessary to line them again or abandon them. [162] The Caribs take branches or sticks of mahot and peel off the bark which they crush with a stone. Then they cut it in pieces as long as a hand, and use it as oakum to calk the seams of their canoes. Sometimes they add gum instead of pitch, but not very often. [164] To make elemi gum they slash a chibou tree. The next day they collect the gum which flows out abundantly. The Caribs use it to tar their pirogues and make from it a beautiful black which they call cóina [185] Máne noumánian is a black resin from South America which they use as pitch. [352]

The paddles of the Caribs differ from French oars. They are polished and are about six feet long. They hold the top of the handle in one hand while the other hand is close to the blade. They dip it straight in, breaking the water when they paddle. [386] They use a

little wooden pin set into the edge of a canoe which holds the paddle. [444] The tiller of a rudder is simply set, for there are no bolts, iron brace plates, or nails. However, it serves its purpose and they steer well at sea. [157] They use a long and strong pole which they carry in their canoes and pirogues in order to keep the prow headed into the waves and to keep the canoe from being thrown on shore. They also use this pole when embarking and disembarking. [265] For an anchor the Caribs use a great rock with small sticks fastened around it like a cage. They throw it into the sea and it is held by a heavy rope of mahot fiber which is fastened to the canoe. Those who are able to do so trade with captains of ships to obtain cordage and anchors. [285] The conch shell is the horn and trumpet of the Caribs. [60] They blow their horn when they intend to land. The Caribs always carry a conch shell in their pirogues to blow and announce their arrival to those of the carbet whom they are visiting. This is done in order that they may come to help them disembark, or if it is at night to bring fire so that the pirogue will not be run aground and broken. [467]

They make a raft by assembling and binding logs from which they fish when they lack canoes. [87]

6. Birth, Education and Marriage

The Caribs observe fasts quite frequently, especially at the death of one of their relatives, upon the birth of their first child, after the capture of an enemy, etc. They usually spend the first five days without eating or drinking. The next four days they drink only a beverage made from boiled cassava. After this time they eat as much cassava starch as they like for a period of two or three months. After this period they continue to abstain from certain meats. The husband rarely starts howling when his wife is in pangs of childbirth. On the contrary I have seen them coming from outdoors, secretly and stealthily, one month after the birth of the child in order to begin their seclusion and fasting. If one asks them questions about this custom they make no answer except to scorn those who do not follow the custom, although they do explain that if one does not behave in this way upon the child's birth, he would grow old sooner, be slower when he runs, and that internal disease would attack him strongly and this evil would spread to the child. [373]

601 Some authors suspect the native Americans to be Jews exiled to these places. I do not know if they are, but I well know that the children of two brothers call themselves brothers, and male cousins marry female cousins born from their own aunts. Moreover, they often refer to a person as father of such a child, they never have surnames, they wash themselves frequently, and they oil their hair. 328 They never eat salt, fat, or pork, and they abstain from a number of 826 birds and fish. Still, I do not believe that at the present time they fast for religious motives -- except for the boyes -- because I have learned from them that if they eat pork they believe that their children will be born with twisted feet. If they eat parrot or manatee they believe that their children might have small, round eyes like those animals, and if they eat garfish or eel the children might have a tapered nose. However, nowadays they eat what we eat when they are among us. I have noticed that those Caribs who eat with us are the most frequently sick and die earlier. This is because the different qualities of our various meats alter their constitution. [275]

352 Eight days after the birth of a child they summon someone to 651 pierce his ears, his lower lip, and the place between his nostrils. They pass string through these places in order to make openings to attach the pendants when the child grows up. These pendants are sometimes made of small caracoli, or glass beads, while others only use five or six cotton threads. If they have pins or hooks they put these through the lower lip. They give the child his name at this same time. This name is very often that of a dead grandfather or a [715] dead grandmother in order to make him or her live again in the person of the child. When the child grows up it changes or retains the name as it likes. [287]

951 The Carib husbands and even their wives are rarely called by their names, and it seems criminal even to think of it. They only pronounce the first syllables, and even these are pronounced only in their absence, for in their presence they would be offended. They use circumlocutions, saying father of such and such a child, for they are not afraid of calling children by their names. In their drinking parties when they are half drunk they think it a great honor to be called by the name of the Arawak that they have killed. Captain Baron was called Callamáina when he was in a state of drunkenness. He took another captain by the hand and in front of all the principal

551 guests at the drinking party said, "I desire to be named, name me." Then the one in front of him laughter and shouted "Hello, so and so." Captain Baron burst into roaring laughter, and he opened his basket and brought out a package of glass beads and rewarded in this way the honor that had been paid to him. [221] The mothers do not lack
304 tender affection for their children, who while young are reluctant to leave their mother's breast during the day or even during the night. It is miraculous that the mothers do not smother them when they are drunk after the drinking parties, although I never heard tell of such an accident while I was among them. If their husbands leave them, the wives keep all the children, and do not give the husband any unless forced to do so, for when the children grow up they become a source of support and subsistence. [282]

302 All the Caribs, men and women, have the same hair style. In
304 order that this hair style is made possible, soon after the child is born a woman is chosen who kneads the head to make it larger at the top and smooths the forehead to be sloping down to the eyes. She flattens the forehead as well as the head, for they think that their beauty depends upon this. All the hair on the front of the head falls in front and is cut as it is done for small girls in France. The side hair covers only the ears, and both men and women let the rest of their hair fall on the back of the head. The mother, for almost two years, sits down during the day and puts one of her child's legs on one of her thighs with its head on her other thigh. When the child is asleep she opens her right hand and puts it on the child's forehead. She leans her left elbow on it and reclines her own head against it. She sleeps in this way with the child in order that the flattening persists. Because this is done they have big eyes which protrude from their heads. I have not noticed that this would cause their flat noses. [145]

355 The Carib women take a child by the hand and lift it high off the ground or from a hammock without worrying about hurting it. The child according to the habit which he has been taught places his bent left knee on the side of his mother, leaving the other foot hanging. The mother grasps him under the right arm and carries him in this way on a short trip. But if she should be traveling far she has a small cotton hammock which she puts around her neck and hangs on one side in which she carries the child. [311] As soon as the children are strong enough, their mothers put them in the middle of the yard where they have cleaned out the stones. Here the children play, roll in the dust,

[255] stand up, and fall down continuously, sometimes on their hands and sometimes on their behinds. They walk on all fours getting so used [491] to it that when they are grown up they catch up with the best runners in this way. [405]

[497] Sometimes the Caribs make incisions to cure some inflammation, but most of the time they do it out of fantasy. It is said that the children are gashed instead of being whipped, but I have not seen it done often. [435]

[515] The Caribs have no other paternoster than the flute. The first one to awake at the cock's crow plays his flute, and the others imitate him as they awaken. After this they go to bathe in the river. The women and children go at a different time. Because the river is cold they make fires by groups in two or three places where they warm themselves. If they are soaked by sea water or rain, or if they are dirty or overheated by some exertion, they return to wash themselves again. Besides this they never fail to go bathing at noon and in the evening. I think that these baths contribute the most to the preservation of their health, and so do their fasts when they are moderate. [383] The children in order to learn how to swim and become accustomed to the ocean waves, as well as to amuse themselves, lay on small planks. They let themselves drift against the breakers and are driven back into the mouth of a river. Others who are stronger let themselves drift with the current of the river and meet the breakers which are rough and frightening where the river hits them, particularly in the district of cabester [sic] where the sea is rougher and the streams are faster. And when they see someone upside down in the waves, or standing there, they laugh to see them when we would be fearful. [314]

[257] [223] The Carib children, having prepared birdlime, cut long poles and attach at the end a very pliable rod which has been smeared with glue. They hold it so that the end is near the flowers where the humming birds find their food. When these birds are not watchful, they hit them with the small rod and having been touched with this rod they remain stuck. The children run quickly, seize them, and tear off the glued feathers, [491] gut the birds, and wrap them in leaves. They dry them in the fire and trade them to the French for books and pins. [228] One type of fly makes [243] holes in the sand to live there. The small Caribs kill them, split them in half, and pick out a small sac filled with honey which they eat. [398] The children make horns out of the stem of a certain plant [406], and [509] the men make whistles out of the leg bones of pelicans. [287]

857 The kayéye is a bird of prey that the children nourish and which
238 is then killed on the children's heads at feasts. Since these birds live only on smaller birds or on fish, the young people are continually hunting or fishing in order to feed them. I have seen them raise a pelican in the following way. They let him fly out to sea after having painted his feathers red. This bird when grown up came back unfailingly each night to his accustomed place. [327]

635 Theft is a great crime among the Caribs who hate the theft as much as the thief. It is said that when they catch one they make a slash with the point of their knife on his shoulders, but I have never seen anyone with these marks. [307]

524 The tibobélle is a spongy fruit which the Caribs use as a ball to play with. [459] A ball which does not bounce is called tarácoñati, [452]

672 Each of the Caribs has a special friend in whom he places an extraordinarily great trust. This friend is termed ibaoñánale or nítignaom. This friendship is so great that it extends to the other brothers who call the friend or compere of their brother ináiniboñe.

231 [303] "Taking the bark off the wood and splitting the sapwood": this is also a term of joking with a man who indulges in women. [51] Some men are fickle in love and often change mistresses. [233]

591 Those who are bound by affinity in another carbet are called coyemánocou and coyemericou, for the men follow their wives and not the wives the men, unless they are captains. Thus those who have many daughters have a greater advantage, for their sons-in-law come to live with them, clear their gardens, make their houses, and go fish-
592 ing for them. [87] As soon as a daughter is born she is destined for her maternal cousin. Then when the two are old enough and have reached a suitable maturity they celebrate marriage. When this determined time is reached the boy goes to the place or dwelling of his promised wife, but only after the parents have consented. If the girl is going to marry a captain or the son of a captain, as it sometimes happens, she is conducted by her father and mother to his dwelling. Having arrived, she carries his dinner to him on a wicker table and eats with him, sitting on the ground. They then say pouliárou lone which is to say that she is married. They have no dance, although sometimes there is a little drinking party to honor the parents when they have come, but this is very uncommon. [268] When a girl is given in marriage to

a man she is told to carry dinner to her intended husband and she eats with him, a thing which is only permitted to wives. [433]

They name the wives of the Caribs according to the order in which they were married. It is a general rule that some of the Caribs have many wives. Nevertheless, there are many women without husbands because the greater part of the husbands have only one wife. There are some who have two wives in one or two carbets. It happens quite often when they are in another island that they do not bring their women with them. They obtain new ones only for the time that they expect to live there. I have never seen two women eating or sleeping with one man at the same time. They do not travel together with him in the same canoe. Each has her turn from month to month, even when pregnant. After giving birth, a wife has no relations with her husband for a long period, fearing that this will harm the child if she did so. The above is what ordinarily happens concerning marriage. There are some abnormalities in particular instances. I have seen [436] two men who took their very own daughters as wives, but all the others hated them because of this. The son of one of these men joined the Capuchin Order, because he was so ashamed of the infamy of his father, and he died a Christian death at the convent of these fathers located at the new street of St. Honoré in Paris. I have seen another who had as wives both a mother and her daughter, and some who had carried off the wives of others because they maintained these women belonged to them by right. They have an expression for this situation which means they ravish women belonging to another. Those who carry the women off call them nábognoni. The old men sometimes take girls who are fourteen or fifteen years old, in addition to all of the slave women which the young men capture. Slave women are given by the young men to their fathers or grandfathers. The children of these marriages are respected and treated as legitimate. Finally certain ones stand under suspicion of tendencies against nature, but this evil is recognized and pointed out. [277]

The women are able to have one husband only, and several wives call their husband by the same name. Carib men are able to have several wives and use several names to distinguish them. They build their wives separate houses in order to live with them more quietly. Women are rarely found all together with their husband, and they never share his hammock. Each wife has a moon during which time she serves him and follows him everywhere. When the moon expires she yields her

place to another. [312] The wives of the Caribs pretend to be brave and they take care not to show their jealousy. But however hard they try, jealousy shows itself. It appears that they have reason to be jealous, for the custom is that a wife having lived for one month with her husband should retire yielding her place to another. Sometimes, however, a man stays for a full year with another, abandoning the one he had chosen previously, and she feels this sharply. If she betrays her husband he will not fail to kill her. I have seen captains who tell their sons-in-law to go and sleep with their wives, for otherwise the captains say, they will give their daughters to others and this has happened several times. [208] When women die the men remarry, and when men die the women take other husbands. If these husbands also die, they can take other husbands. [269]

The Carib women do not approach anyone when they have their menstrual cycle upset and they will not allow anyone to approach them, no matter what bad treatment they receive for this conduct, because they believe that this would upset the cycle more. [298]

The young married people turn aside to avoid speaking and meeting their fathers-in-law, brothers-in-law, mothers-in-law and sisters-in-law. When I observed this I asked them why they avoided speaking with people who are so useful to them. Their reply was, "It is not permitted for me. I dare not do it." [301] "Your mother-in-law is troublesome to you when she does not see her husband." [136]

Acátobou is a maternal uncle, i.e. mother's brother. Neukécayem is an uncle who has married a maternal aunt. Naheupouli is an aunt. Ninántaganun is the term by which uncles call their nephews who are sons of their sisters. The aunts call these nephews ibátomon. Uncles and aunts call their nieces nibáche. Uncles and aunts call the children of their nephews nínibotte, nitamotte. The children of nephews call their great uncles and great aunts by the same term that their fathers use for these very same relatives. First cousins whom we call sons of the father's brother are called "brother." The brothers of the father are also called "father." The children of brothers never marry among themselves. But if the sisters of their fathers should have daughters they may well marry them. If there should be no daughters these male cousins are called ispátagnum. Girl cousins call their maternal male cousins nígatou when their sisters do not marry them, and in this case the boy cousins call these girl cousins nioûille atonum. However, if these boy cousins should take these girl cousins in marriage, the female cousin is

601 called nicouélleri and she calls him nîkêliri. A male cousin after he is married drops all his previous names and is called ibamoüi. Female cousins after marriage retain the name nibancou. Children of these marriages on the uncle's side are called ibamoüi nicapoüe, and on the aunt's side ibamoüi nigatou, that is to say, these are the terms the above-mentioned cousins use.

Nirannium is the name that the sister-in-law gives to her brother-in-law. Nannîre or oüaranincou is the name which the brother-in-law gives to his sister-in-law. The fathers and mothers of the married people are called nícherou. The fathers-in-law call their sons-in-law ibalimoucou. The mothers-in-law call them nitignon, nitan, or nititi. The sons-in-law call their fathers-in-law imetancou or imetamoulou. The sons-in-law call their mothers-in-law iménouni. The father-in-law uses the same name, nackre, for both his daughter-in-law and for mother-in-law. These women call him nétegnon. Most of the time cheu is the name for all the children, both one's own as well as others.

The women take these names according to their rank in marriage: liboüiré, liboüignácou, kieíto, liboüyaóni.

These are the terms by which the children call their father's wives who are not their true mothers: noucoüchouroutónarou or ichanúmneni. If a woman has children of somebody other than her husband these children are called ioumantêni. Men and women call their children from other marriages iniemoütouli or niraheücayem. Children coming from Carib men and negro women are called chibárali, cachíonna, or yabouloüpou. [11]

7. Occupations

461 The Caribs are strong and robust, but nevertheless, they only work lightly. In the morning after breakfast they go here and there to work or to hunt, but it is necessary that the weather is good and that the dew has disappeared. Before they will put out to sea they say "let us wait until it becomes warm." Meanwhile a breeze usually comes up and they have much more difficulty rowing. When they are asked to clear a garden they come with their axes and cut down very much in a single morning, but then they drink the rest of the day and all the following

461 night. If they build a pirogue or a house it takes them an entire year to do the work. When they stay in their houses, some make baskets and others make oars which they smooth with glass or with pumice stone; and others rock themselves in their hammocks, talk, or play the flute. These occupations do not break their arms. They[1] [142] all are of good size, muscular, thick-set and well-proportioned, although their food is poor and meager. As a consequence they are not energetic. The women are scarcely more diligent for they need six months or even years to make one cotton hammock. They work 511 in the morning making cassava, cooking, and watching their children. After eating they go to their garden, harvest manioc, clear the spot, dig the ditches, and replant it. Then they come back with their burdens and give their husbands dinner and then they themselves eat. They peel and grate the manioc and squeeze it. These are the ordinary occupations of the women and of the wives of captains as well. [200]

The Carib women go to their gardens every day to dig sweet potatoes or manioc, and the wives of the captains go just as the others do. After they have uprooted the crop they clean the soil and replant the manioc or potatoes. They do not use spades, nor hoes, because they are not accustomed to them, but use a sharp stick. They dig the soil with it and make a ditch for manioc, then go back loaded with their full carrying basket. [149]

241 The Caribs don't use our vegetables. They have gardens instead of fields and vineyards. They obtain from them bread and ouicou, that is to say they grow manioc and sweet potatoes. This is what we call our plantations. This is different from the Caribs for whom houses and carbet are separated from gardens. They dig one hole here and there, different from the French whose gardens and houses are not scattered. [281]

"I have planted manioc wood" is the expression for saying "I sowed or planted." The main cultivation of the country are roots produced by a small tree. When it is uprooted and the root is taken, one cuts the wood into pieces as long as fingers which are placed into the cultivated ground with a digging stick. These produce other small manioc trees with roots. [96]

313 Every evening groups of women go to the woods carrying axes to split sandlewood which they cut into little splinters. They put

[1] [i.e., the Caribs.—Analyst]

313 these into their carrying baskets. They come home loaded and give enough to each one to make a fire under his hammock during the night. [232]

248 Cotton is indispensable to the Caribs for hammocks, for stringing ornaments, and for tying the feathers on their arrows. They also use it to fasten their arrowheads made either of green wood or of the tail of the sting ray, in place of iron. It is to obtain cotton that leads them to fish at the Saints or to catch crabs at Marie-Galante, for they make clearings in those places to grow cotton. You see very few Caribs who do not always carry a small roll of cotton in their baskets. The French ships do not willingly encumber themselves with cotton because of the fear of fire and because it does not load ship well. [280]

283 The women having taken the cotton from its pod and picked out the seeds then put a headless arrowshaft into it. Then they turn the cotton, which thins like carded wool. When it breaks off they attach an end to the arrow. A woman holds the arrow in one hand and in the other holds a spindle which is as long as an arm's length or more. The thread stop is a round object made of tortoise shell and is as wide as the hand with a length of about half a foot measured from the end of the shaft. This end is placed on the ground. The spindle shaft point is pressed against the women's thigh, and she rolls it back and forth with her extended hand up and down the length of her thigh. This is how the Carib women spin thread. [114]

415 A small calabash is cut into two parts and is painted by the women. It is used as a glass or a cup. [439] They cut halves from two calabashes in such a way that one half fits inside the other and forms a box. They pass cords through it and they use them as little chests, as bags, and as knapsacks. [128] They use a big and long calabash as a pot for a drink offered to some visitor, or when a sacrifice is offered. It rests on the longest part and is open on the other side. They draw off water from the opening in this calabash using a smaller one. [198]

231 The Caribs never feed any animals except by necessity or entertainment. If they have roosters it is to wake them up in the morning. If they keep birds it is to draw out their plumes in order to adorn themselves, and they use the other kind to teach their children to fish and hunt. If they keep dogs it is to hunt pigs and agoutis. If they have chickens they would prefer to die rather than to eat them, and

231 they will not eat even a single egg. Perhaps they are no longer so disgusted by them. [290] The word for dog is chou-chou. The dogs of the Caribs in the beginning were medium sized, had upright ears like foxes, and were raised to hunt agoutis and lizards. These dogs could not stand us because of our clothes. Now the Caribs take any kind of dog they can get. [166]

224 The Caribs hunt agoutis with the same eagerness that the French hunt hares. The agouti has the head of a rat, with rough hair on his hind quarters which stands up when he is frightened. His tail is smaller and shorter than that of a rabbit. His color is brown, bordering on black. He eats sitting up like a squirrel and holds food in his front paws. When the agouti is chased by dogs, he hides in the hollow of a tree like in a fort, but the Caribs set fire at the entrance to smoke him out, and the dogs catch him when he runs out.

252 When the meat is fresh the taste is too gamy, but the flavor improves when it is kept until the next day and is salted. The Caribs prepare it by roasting and expose the meat to smoke. Then they wrap it up in leaves and keep it as long as they wish. The meat dries up like leather. Nevertheless, it softens when boiled for a long time in manioc water, and it makes good food for the Caribs who eat almost no other land animal. [430]

223 The Caribs know the trees where parrots have their next. They go to catch them when they are downy. They cage them and then teach them how to speak and whistle. [218] The Caribs do not yet 48 use stairs, steps, or ladders. Yet they are able to climb everywhere. I have seen some grab hold on a tree with their two hands and put the soles of their feet against the tree. This requires great strength. Possibly they don't all climb in this way. [205]

226 The Caribs are watchful, but it is only to go out at night for crabs, or to shoot fish from the rocks, in order to provide for the next day. They only collect provisions for one day, so that should anyone come late, they will scarcely find a piece of cassava to give him. [297] The Caribs hunt crabs at night with torches. [367] Crabs are tied in pairs along five or six sticks. The Caribs hold them by the ends and this makes up the load of one man. [129]

When the Caribs sail along the coasts and see lobsters at the bottom of the sea they dive in from the canoe with a rock in order to go more easily to the bottom. Having seized the lobster they drop the stone and bring up their catch, sometimes getting their nose filled

[226] with water despite themselves. Sea water in their nose bothers them
225 a great deal. [395] When the Caribs see a pair of tortoises they give a shout and immediately jump into a canoe. Approaching the tortoises very quietly they slip a cord around the flipper of the male which they are only able to catch in this way, unless they use harpoons. The female is sometimes captured by a cord and sometimes by harpooning, but usually females are captured on the beach where they go to lay eggs. [195] To catch manatee, tortoise, and other big sea animals the fisherman called the harpooner takes his little canoe and goes to the place where the fishing is to be done. He takes with him a long straight pole as long as a halberd, at the end of which is the nail for harpooning. There is a line attached to the harpoon. The harpooner stands on the prow of the canoe and is accompanied by two seamen. One of these men paddles quietly until they are within a reasonable distance of the animal. The harpooner pierces it with his hurled harpoon, while the second seaman lets the line run against the side of the canoe until the animal has exhausted his energy and given up his fury. Then he draws the line back, while the animal resists, and the canoe soon reaches it. The harpooner being prepared hurls a second harpoon while once again the line is let run. The animal being held fast is brought into the canoe or towed to the sloop. Here it is dressed and salted. [359] The tail of the ray is its defense and it is very dangerous. I have seen a Carib who had harpooned one and attempted to seize it too soon and was stung. He was not able to use his hand one year after, although it looked cured. [143]

226 There are shallow rocks which are very dangerous to ships. In calm weather the Caribs go to fish there because that is where the fish ordinarily feed. [131]

There is a weed called conámi which sometimes comes up in gardens so abundantly that they are ruined by it. They crush this weed on a rock and then stir it in stagnant water. The fish which smell it jump, sometimes even above the water, and then die. After they have taken the fish the Caribs eat them without suffering any ill effects. When the Caribs are hungry and the sea is stormy they say "lets go to poison the river." Eels are caught in the same way. [177]

To fish for coulirou the Caribs make a sisal fiber line spun out like a thread. At one end they fasten a pewter fishhook and they fasten the other end of the line to a rod. They throw in the hook, pull it a little, and then draw it out. They throw it back immediately.

226 [439] They pull out the hook often, even though it has no bait. [182] The Caribs have bought from the French cheap pewter plates, which they use to make these fishhooks. They cut them lengthwise into strips, roll them, stretch them out somewhat, and bend them into the shape of a fishhook. They then attach it to finely spun line which is very strong. The Caribs also use our pins which they bend and cover with a worm. [336]

The shark is a large and very greedy fish which devours in a short time any prey it can catch. It evens eats men when they are bathing or fall into the sea, as once happened to some Caribs whose canoe capsized. The shark cut them to pieces, and the zeal of other Caribs who quickly came to help could not prevent it. They found only arms and thighs which were still warm and throbbing. To catch this voracious fish the Caribs drag a huge hook behind their pirogue. This hook is baited with a piece of white wood, or some rags, which the shark swallows at the expense of its life. The Caribs eat small sharks but not big ones. They use the skins as files to smooth their [412] oars. [396]

They pierce a small fish with one of the points of an arrow in order to bait a hook with it. [61] The fishhook leader is a small cord which is sticky and which they tie to the fishhook a little way up so that the fish will not break the line. [50, 147] They use a trident, or an arrow with points, which they hurl at crayfish and other fish. [168]

411 [526] They shoot arrows at a target. The young men cut a papaya which is a soft spongy tree, hollow, quite big at the foot, and which stands like a pyramid. They shoot against it and the arrows penetrate without being blunted. This is their archery, which is one their amusements. [225] They use a kind of wadding which is put on the end of their arrows instead of a point to shoot a bird in order to knock it out and take it alive without wounding it. [77, 265] One of their common occupations is to make arrows, or at least tips of them. These are made of green wood and are as long as the hand or longer, are barbed like harpoons, and take the place of iron. [238, 272] There is a kind of reed (bouleotta) which bears its flower at the top. It is a rod straight as a line which bears feathery branches. When these are removed the stalk is used to make the shaft of the arrow which has the same name as the reed. [90] Manchineel bears a sweet smelling fruit, but it is very poisonous. The Caribs give the tree a blow with their axe, and

411 the sap which comes out is pure poison. They dip their arrows into it. [67] There is another kind of arrowhead made from the tip of a ray's tail. This is the most dangerous arrow because it is sharp at the end and swells after it enters. Besides it is saw-toothed, and is of itself poisonous. [90]

415 The catâoli is the carrying basket of the Carib women woven with rush called oüalloman. This basket does not look like the baskets of France. It has a rather large bottom and is completely open in the front. The two sticks are fastened with mahot bark four fingers wide which then passes around the head and is supported by the forehead rather than by the arms. They carry articles in it by tying them firmly with a small cord. They carry cotton hammocks, manioc, and other things. These would not stay inside unless they were fastened. Each woman has her own. [111] With regard to [482] lighter burdens they bend the elbow against the side and carry them with forearm upright, the hand opposite the shoulder, as when they carry calabashes full of oüicou. [124]

The iamânti is a double basket lined between the two walls with cachibou leaves. This basket is made of a reed called ticasguet. They also attach the sails of their canoes to this reed. [267] They pass two strings into the interweaving of the basket in order to tighten it. They also do the same with a crudely made basket covered with chibou leaves. This is used as a mold for the other basket made over it which they fasten with sticky strings. [147]

[352] The matoûtou is a small table woven of oüalloman reed. It is very neatly made and rests on four little sticks half a foot high. They make an offering by spreading cassava on this table and placing a calabash full of food on it. [357] Some ibichets [sifter, seive] are used to strain oüicou and the holes of this kind are close together. There are others used to sift manioc flour, the holes being square. The Caribs make them with oüalloman reeds. There are two shapes of sieves, round and square. The square shaped ones are more convenient because they are mounted on sticks which support them. [189]

415 252 The Carib manioc press is called mâtabi. It looks like a long stocking, and is woven of oüalloman. It is hung by its upper end. When filled with manioc flour it has the appearance of a snake and also the name of one. The Caribs pass a large stick through the lower end of the press, (one end) of the stick being stuck under and held by a piece of wood. The upper end (of the stick) is loaded with some

415 locks which lengthens and presses this basketry so much that by its
252 weight is easily draws out of the flour all of the water which is in it. The Caribs collect the water in a calabash and use it to cook their meats. Only the old Caribs know how to make this device. [356] The ócoácae is a basket loosely woven from oüalloman strips which they make at the same time as the snake-like manioc press used to press their flour. [395] (This basket may have been used to contain the stone weights which would explain its manufacture in conjunction with the manioc press--Editors.)

The camoücoulou is a calabash made of grass which holds a full bucket of water. [107]

824 The comáti is a tree which the Caribs use by stripping and grating the under bark. They press out the juice which they mix) with a little water, in order to dilute it so that it can be used. Then, when their oüalloman is prepared they tie its wooden supports right at the middle in order to make beautiful baskets. Next they varnish this gummy juice on half of it. Immediately after this beautiful black becomes dry they revarnish it again which makes it beautiful, shining, and so durable that unless you scrape it off it does not disappear. [175] Some urucu unmixed with oil is used to redden the oüalloman reeds when they make baskets. [397]

412 The word tachâragle is used to refer to many tools. It may be an iron chisel, a cudgel of wood shaped like a wood chisel which they use to stuff oakum into seams, or it may be a kind of poker dipped into pitch to calk the boat. It is also a spindle with which the women spin, or it can be a stick used to pierce the earth for planting tobacco. [113] From the thorn of a palmetto they make a needle, as long as a finger, with which they make thread used for their sashes. This needle is also used in their hairdress. [114]

534 The Caribs cut certain tap roots, scoop them out, and make flutes. [186] They have three flutes arranged and attached together. I have seen two Caribs at a drinking party who decided to play it and danced to its cadence opposite to one another. They did this so well that our own dancers would scarcely excel them. [239]

8. Food and Its Preparation

262 The Caribs cannot be starved out because their houses are not closed, and as soon as they see danger, or suspect it, they go into the mountains where they have gardens for this contingency. Besides, if they are on the seashore they find different kinds of shellfish on or under the rocks. They fish in the rivers for tadpoles, crayfish, and small snails upon which they can subsist. They know the fruit-bearing trees in the woods, as well as roots as big as the thigh, which are the yams, and these are also eaten in their houses. The Frenchmen are not so clever when they first arrive in the islands. At the beginning of the colonization of Guadeloupe, we had trouble with the natives. They beseiged us for a few hours, and although they withdrew, they continued to wander in the woods and also along the coasts in their canoes, and they killed anyone they met. The dearth of bread and water compelled the other French to starve in their houses. [226]

241 Manioc is of great advantage to the poorer inhabitants of the islands, as well as to the Caribs. The latter have no need for horses, plows, granaries, threshers, nor do they require cellars for casks or vintagers to cultivate and gather their grapes. This is true because they sustain themselves on roots. A single man who worked only at this task would be able to feed fifty people at least. The Caribs use most of their manioc to brew beer. Manioc is a shrub which bears grain but they do not eat this nor do they sow it. They only cut off some of the shoots which they uproot. The Caribs replant it in the following way. Instead of a hoe they use a great stick, pointed at the end, which they hold in their hands and break the soil with repeated blows. They dig out a hole the size of a bushel in which they plant some shoots of manioc of about an arm's length or longer. These shoots are sometimes planted flat and sometimes placed upright. The French make a hole three feet long and two feet wide which they call a manioc trench. Along the middle of the trench they plant four manioc shoots, each being four fingers thick. The large end is always in the air because it does not grow well in the soil. They weed until the manioc covers the land. White manioc is edible after eight months, red manioc after one year, purple manioc may be kept longer in the soil, and the black variety can remain in the soil two or three years. At the beginning the stem grows upright until worms attack the top. When leaves drop off joints appear and are ready to be sprouts for planting. The unprepared

241 root is pure poison which might kill someone. Even cassava may have the same effect when it is not sufficiently cooked. If manioc water could kill when drunk abundantly, all the Caribs would now be dead, for they eat no fish, meat, or tomali which is not cooked in manioc water. Cassava by itself is so little nourishing that at the beginning when I was among the Caribs, one could not hear me speak two feet away because I was so weak. It is true that I did not eat enough of it. Eaten with sweet potatoes or something else, cassava is sufficient even at sea, provided that the taste of tobacco has not spoiled it. I think it is fortunate that cassava is light on the stomach. [328]

Kiére is the name for manioc [328] Purple manioc is called itachaheu, red manioc is miriti, and black manioc is beléhuera. [330]

412 The grating device of the Caribs is a small plank covered with
252 sharp little inlaid stones. After supper all the women grate only the manioc roots which will be used the following day, because ordinarily they eat only fresh bread. The women wash and then grate the manioc and reduce it to a flour. The Carib women grate each day in order to have stale manioc water which they use the next morning to boil their fish. They also do it so that the water will drain out and the flour will become slightly sour. This sourness takes the place of yeast, and without it cassava would be too sweet, tasteless, and not appetizing. [139]

262 The fine flour of manioc is mouchache. The Carib women grate the manioc in the evening, and the one who has finished first puts her head outside and shouts to the others, "Come to press the flour." They all come with their calabashes and gather around the flour and take some in their hands, press it into their calabashes, and then put it back. They go then to another house and so forth, until they have enough of what they need. Back home they put their calabash in some spot in the house and let the manioc water settle for use the next day in cooking. The fine flour settles to the bottom and is hard like wax. They ordinarily crush this into a powder to mix it with other flour in order to improve the cassava. The girls make cassava consisting only of this flour, the bread being no thicker than a cat's tongue. When this is well baked it crunches when eaten and is very appetizing. [224]

Cassava, called márou, is made from pressed manioc flour which is spread out on a warm plate and is as thick as a finger or a thumb.

252 When it seems doughy and has been turned over once it is cooked and they put it to dry on a mat of reeds or on a sloping plank. Then it is stored and they keep it as long as they wish. If stored cassava has become too hard they soften it in a plate full of water to which lime or lemon juice, salt and pimento have been freely added. It draws water like a sponge, especially if no water was added to the cassava when it was made. [355] The women take the cassava off the griddle with a piece of tortoise shell. [460]

273 Women chew the cassava out of which they make ouicou before they put it in their pots. They are asked to do so whenever a drinking party is to be held. This is very disgusting; however the beer turns out to be much better. The expression "chew ouicou" is used for this process. When they don't chew cassava, a different expression is used. [117]

They grate sweet potatoes which they let spoil. Sometimes they make a kind of ouicou out of these grated sweet potatoes which they call camaleite. [107]

With unpressed flour the Caribs make cassava loaves which are about six inches thick and half baked. They place them on banana leaves laid on a plank and sprinkle them with sea water. Having wrapped them in these leaves they leave them for eight days. By this time the loaves are red. They knead them, wrap them again, and keep them for two months. After this period they make a very strong ouicou. I once drank a quantity equivalent to two glasses of this kind of ouicou and I had its fumes with me all day long so strongly that it was as if I had drunk a great deal of the best burgundy of Beaune. [302]

When the manioc has been uprooted, stored, and brewed into a drink, the next day it is passed around, and the day after it is drunk. The women have a sieve which is not finely meshed. They put it over the opening of a pot. Having mixed ouicou in this jar they pour it through the sieve into calabashes. There is some of the mash left which they throw to the animals. It is at the same time a food and drink. What seemed very disgusting to me is that they have four or [305] five cotton threads passed through their noses and also threads through their lower lip. Before the calabash reaches their mouth, these cotton trinkets fall into it and ouicou mash clings to them, trickles down, and really disgusts all who are not accustomed to it. [119]

252 Camagnem is a root similar to manioc but it is nonpoisonous. They roast it on coals and then eat it like sweet potatoes, but it is not so good as the sweet potato. [107]

The sweet potatoes, called mabi, is the mana of these islands, and having it one cannot die of hunger. Sweet potatoes are not subject to the ravages of hurricanes, in contrast to manioc which is sometimes ruined by them. The roots and leaves of sweet potatoes are edible and the ends of the sprouts may be eaten like asparagus. A meal would not be complete without sweet potatoes. One cooks them like chestnuts, whose taste they resemble, either in a kettle or under the ashes. The stems and leaves are so nourishing that two bundles of them per day are sufficient to feed the biggest pigs kept in pens. [342]

The yam is called namoüin or couchou. It is a big root from which the Caribs make bread and a fermented drink. They cook it as they do a sweet potato. [365] Sweet potatoes and other roots good to eat are called oüle. [421]

Two months after maize is seeded it is grown. The Caribs gather it, roast it on coals, and eat it. Out of maize the Galibis make [273] palinot which is as good as beer. The French use it to feed poultry, although some put it in their flour, mixed half and half with French wheat. This makes a good bread with a pleasing flavor. It is called márichi, or aoüáchi. [355]

Island peas, called mancónti, come up in a short time and are much easier to digest than our varieties. They have different kinds -- white, black, red, and seven-year peas. Out of these they make a reddish soup verging on black. [352]

Sugar cane is used by the Caribs who strip off the leaves and [272] pound the stems in a pestle. Then they put them in a pot full of water. They make a good drink which they have after it is well boiled. [167]

The term for a bunch of figs or bananas is lacálla. I don't know why we call bananas bunches of figs, probably because this fruit is numerous and well ordered. [102]

262 The carratas is a kind of fruit which the Caribs use to quench their thirst when they are far from water. A good juice could be made out of it. The fruit is abundant and grows along one elongated stem, and is so closely set one upon another that it is difficult to take off the first one. [118]

The coúlaoña is a fruit which looks like pineapple but is smaller. 261
It furnishes hemp for the Caribs. [183]

The Carib cabbage is called táya. I have seen several kinds 262
among the Caribs, who consider it to be a good remedy. I have not [274]
delved into the problem of learning its virtues. I know there is one
kind which has red-ribbed leaves. They press the juice which they mix
[30] with urucu [body paint] and redden themselves with it, firmly believing
that they make themselves pleasing to their enemies and that they have
nothing to fear when they take this precaution. The other kinds of
cabbages which are more common are added to their cooking instead
of seasoning, and their tips are prepared like Spanish chard. The
Caribs cook the roots and make a drink out of it. [453]

262 The Carib women take termite nests and fill their pots, which
222 are their ovens, and add some rotten and dry wood. When the fire is
set it cooks slowly. [176] The Caribs are fond of honey and they know
the trees where it can be found. When they see a honey fly going to a
tree they place their ear against the tree. If they hear the buzzing of
honey flies they fell the tree and take the honey which they distribute
to each one in his calabash. They mix it with water and drink it im-
mediately. The honey flies have no stinger although they swarm on
the Caribs and tickle them with their tiny legs so much that they can
scarcely bear it. [350] Lice are an appreciated delicacy. The Carib
women roll them between their teeth and savor them for a quarter of
an hour. I have tried to make them ashamed of it, but whatever I
said about their imagined delicacy failed to provoke the disgust which
they reserve only for lice born on the heads of those from another nation.
[140]

Toads are eaten at Martinique like frogs. They are good. [238]

262 The Caribs do not have the patience to pluck the feathers out of
a bird. I have been with them to the Saints where they catch birds
called tsúrou. First they cut off half of the wings on a piece of wood.
Then they throw the bird in the fire, turning it over several times. They
reach in and put it on a grill without cleaning it, and allow it to lie
enveloped by smoke, sometimes for quite a while. They eat it without
a sauce. They peel off only the outer skin and remove the guts. [240]
The wives of the Caribs cook freshly caught fish in fresh water, often
half-cleaned without being scaled. They season it with pepper. After
they have poured off the sauce they use some small sticks of wood which
they have taken from the fire to remove the fish from the pot. To
divide and distribute it cleanly, they wash their hands with a mouthful

252 of water sucked out of a calabash. Nevertheless, during this process they wipe their hands on their buttocks, or use fresh grass which they find around them. [213] The sea worm is very slimy. The Caribs turn it over, suck the entrails and then throw the rest out. Sometimes 253 when they have nothing to eat they rub them in the ashes to clean off 252 the mucus and cook these sea worms and eat them. [68] They put into a small earthenware pot fine manioc flour, forty to fifty grains of pimento about as big as your thumb, scales and fish bones, and agouti bones which they have gnawed; they boil this all together in manioc water which is poisonous. This is their sauce and they dip their cassava into it when they have nothing else. It becomes so hot and tart that the strength of pepper comes up and makes their noses run as if they had taken the strongest mustard, and it makes them sneeze. Big tears come afterwards. The others who watch also weep, but it is because they laugh so hard. [109] They neither eat soup nor meat broth and have no other sauces than their tomali. [281]

262 The coubbeu is a tree which has a nut as big as the thumb, but it is round and the skin is like that of an acorn. When these nuts are yellow and ripe the Caribs gather them and broil them in order to shell them by rolling them on a hot plate. Next they are put in a basket and exposed to moisture and rain in order to make them rotten. Then the rotten nuts are kneaded into a paste on a plank made for this purpose. The paste is exposed to the sun which separates out the oil because it becomes extremely warm. After they draw off as much as possible this way they put the paste under a press in order to separate out the rest of the oil. [178]

29% The Caribs clear a place in the midst of the fire, or hearth, and have put in a whole leaf of tobacco. When it becomes well dried they press it between their hands and only the ribs remain; the part of the leaf already crumpled is then reduced to a powder. They mix this with some white ashes and with a little sea water. Having soaked it all together in this way they put a pinch between their lip and gum. Frequently they become faint because it is so strong, or they become intoxicated. This is, however, their ordinary way of taking tobacco. It causes them to spit excessively. After they have kept it in their mouth a long time they scrub their teeth with it, which makes them as white as ivory. [117]

252 The great earthen pots in which the Caribs make their ouicou
415are called canálli or canari. The ouicou which has fermented is sifted and put into pots called chamícou and taôiouã. They are filled and put before guests instead of ordinary pots. Such great pots may hold the volume of twenty to thirty ordinary pots, or they may hold less according to the number of people served. The rouãra pot is used to cook sweet potatoes. The iáligali pot is used to roast fish. There is a fire underneath and it has no bottom, being placed on some stones. In order to have some draft it is narrow at the top. Some little sticks are placed across the mouth on which they put fish which cooks slowly, the heat being retained within the pot. [107] They use three rocks to support a pot when they put it on the fire. [350] The boutéicha is an earthen jar. [94] The boutalli has the shape of a dish on which the French women dry their collars, and they have retained its name. It is made of baked earth and is placed on three rocks at a height from the ground of half a foot or more, with a smokeless blaze underneath. Having warmed it up, manioc flour is poured on it and cooked. This is the Carib oven. [93] They cover the mouth of a pot when they burn gum under it to blacken it in order that the smoke sticks to the vessel. [62]

The Carib grill is made with four forked sticks planted into the ground with traverse sticks across. It has a great fire underneath. The Carib word for grill is arîbelet. [52]

9. Dress and Ornaments

291 If their nakedness is shocking, their carefulness prevents as much as it can the unruled movements of a corrupted nature from appearing. Furthermore, they have a belt at the level of their kidney which hangs around the front. They attach it with windings around the prepuce [304] which is not circumcised, although some people have hinted they were Jews. They do not crudely perform indecent actions in front of people; this is not what some people, cruder than the Caribs, attempt to make us believe. I should say for their honor, and to make the Christians ashamed, that I have never seen them perform a shameful action in front of people. [227]

302. [345] The Caribs plant bichet trees near their houses, for otherwise the birds would spoil them. They make urucu from the fruit of this tree. It produces its fruit in bunches, the fruit looking like the stone of a peach although it is not so hard. They boil it in water and when the water is tepid they rub this fruit between their hands in the water. The paint falls to the bottom and makes a layer like wax. They mix it with powder from charred sandle wood, because otherwise its brilliance would hurt their eyes. Then they add oil to the mixture, and redden themselves often with it. This is their best shirt. This paint fills their pores, prevents seawater from drying on their body, and also repels the mosquitos and kills chiggers. [79] They crush urucu on a flat stone in the same way our painters use a marble slab. They mix it with oil and make a mask on their face as thick as a 30 sous coin, when they go to a drinking party. [240] When a man plans to go to a feast he will stand up and his wife draws curves and lines from the shoulders down to the buttocks. She covers the back, arms, and chest with fanciful designs which are not unpleasant to look at. However, I have more admired the man's patience than the painting itself, for the man sometimes remains standing for twelve hours. [331] Women also draw designs on hammocks and calabashes, but our painters would be likely to question calling these women artists. [89] There is a soot produced by elemi gum being burned under a large pot or some other earthenware vessel. They brush the soot off with a feather. This is the most beautiful black it is possible to find. Boys and girls keep some of it in small calabashes in order to paint themselves with it when they go to feasts. After they have washed well and wiped their faces they dip a small brush in it and draw very delicate lines above their eyelashes and along their eyelids. Others draw Spanish mustaches which they draw twisted on their cheeks in an infinity of scrolls. They also draw a thousand other sketches to prevent their recognition by anyone they meet. [419] They have a special mirror in front of their eyes in order to draw a more amusing and grotesque design. [174] One could scarcely find a Carib who did not have a small mirror for use when he ornaments himself before a feast, and also for use in discovering and pressing the small pimples which come to their faces. [236]

The young girls and boys have a lock of hair on their foreheads. This is cut straight across. Men and women have their forehead and [304] the front part of their head flattened in order to make it more beautiful. If they chanced to be sick in their infancy at the time their head was soft and it could not be shaped in this way, they are supposed to be ugly.

soft and it could not be shaped in this way, they are supposed to be ugly. Both men and women let their hair grow long and tie it neatly behind their head when they go out. In their drinking parties they wear long and beautiful feathers of the Aras bird or the Feuta en Queue in their hair. They surround these feathers with a very handsome crown of other feathers. [92]

They women cut their hair upon the death of their husbands, and husbands cut their hair upon the death of their wives. The children cut their hair upon the death of their father or mother. The hair is cut for the period of a year. The slaves have their hair cut all the time and are never allowed to let their hair grow. [319] They have their hair cut to the neck which means they are in mourning. [458]

They climb along a cliff with a small ledge in order to catch the Feuta en Queue, so called because it has only one feather at the tail, beautiful and long, which they stick into their hair and of which they are very proud. [88] To bind their hair they use a ribbon or braid which they make themselves with cotton thread and the thorn of a palmetto, which serves as a needle. This ribbon is very strong when it is completed and tied at the end. When it is slack at the end it frays. The ends are decorated with two tufts and over these are two thimbles which decorate and embellish them. [230]

A great insult which the women commonly say to their children is "wavy hair," because of the trouble they have when they comb their hair for them. To avoid difficulty they use oils throughout the youth of their children to make the hair thicker and to allow the comb to pass more easily through it. I have seen a mother who took fresh manioc flour with which she covered the head of a child and let it dry and become sticky. I don't know if this helped. [155]

They take a sliver out of a stem of a certain plant which they bend to shave the temples of the head and the eyelashes after having dampened them with manioc water. [366]

The ornaments of the men are of caracoli, as well as garters and bracelets of glass beads four fingers wide which they wear on their wrists and at the biceps of the arm. They also wear thimbles, small bells, and necklaces of jaguar teeth. When they catch cats, they never spare them but take their teeth and make smaller necklaces out of them. The women also appreciate green stones, caracoli, and glass beads,

30 / just like the men. They are also fond of large crystal beads, thimbles, little bells, and fancy leggings. [208] Caracolli is a metal which was sent to France to be analyzed and imitated, but this was in vain because the Caribs always discerned the fraud. Silver and even gold does not impress them compared with this metal. It has the advantage that rust and corrosion do not attack it, and oil, grease, and even dirt do not spoil it much because it can be cleaned by rubbing your hand over it. They use it to make crescents which they hang around their necks. This is the most precious of their jewels. They have some spangles as large as the finger which they attach to their pierced noses. A man who owns a caracolli ornament believes himself to be rich. If you give a Carib a caracolli ornament you could get a slave in return, because this ornament is rare and precious among them and other things are nothing compared to it. [106]

The men collect several packages of beads which are small beads of glass, white like pearls, and which are strung together as they are worn in France. They make great sashes out of them which they put on one shoulder and pass under the arm on the other side. They wrap another on the other side in the same way in the form of the Cross of St. Andrew or double sash. After the Carib has been reddened these serve as decorations together with their caracolli ornaments which are suspended around their neck and fall on their chest. [84] These [139] white glass beads are brought from Venice, at least the greater share of them. The Caribs are very much interested in them and string them on small sisal fiber cords and wrap them around like garters of a width of three fingers, or else wear them around the bicep of their arms, or at the wrist like bracelets. I have previously spoken of their use as sashes. These white beads contrast sharply against their red bodies. The women are no less interested in these beads than are the men. [98] Those who cannot get glass beads make little braids with cotton thread which they use to make sashes, and this type is more ancient than the other. [100]

They wear a ribbon of cotton having a width of four or five fingers which they use to ornament their head as a crown. [287] At feasts women wear elegant combs in the front part of their hair which form very pretty crests. The women are compared with hummingbirds. [90] They wear long plumes from the tail of the Arau or the single one from the Faisan or Queue bird which they put at the end of their braided

301 hair. It reminds one of a French comb. [180] They wear a well-made cap of reeds around which feathers are attached in the shape of a crown. It is most proper that these beautiful feathers are arranged here. [210, 401] The Caribs wear a necklace made from clear and almost transparent fish bones. This ornament is almost always worn with a caracolli ornament. [268] The women wear a large sash made like a horse's barb when they go to feasts, and from the sash hang tassels and little bells which make a sound which harmonizes with their dancing. [287] The women wear imitation green stones as ornaments but they do not prize them greatly. [346]

291 There is a cotton band four fingers wide which covers the shameful parts and is called nicétaicouli or in the women's language sérere. The Island Caribs never wear them and go entirely naked. [23] They have a small double cap made of ottalleman reed with cachibou leaves between the two layers. They are used by some of Caribs at sea, or to protect their heads during showers, or against the rigors of the sun. They do not often wear them. [285]

301 The leggings of the women are called echépoulou. They put them on their own legs, and they are so firmly tightened that they cause the calf of the leg to swell. When they paint their husbands red they always rub their hands on their leggings, so that they finally make them stiff. The leggings shrink when they become wet. To avoid this accident I have seen a girl walking on her two hands, which were stretched out behind her back, when she crossed a stream and her mother carried her two feet. The mother looked like a peddler pushing a wheelbarrow. At that time it amazed me because I did not know the cause of this mystery. The end of the legging extends to the ankle and is surrounded by a round edge which is pliable and does not hamper. The echépoulérou is the garter woven in the same way as the leggings which surrounds the upper part of the calf. The wives of the Caribs consider these leggings to be the most beautiful of their ornaments and the most unquestioned sign of their [297] freedom. This is the reason why they never allow any slave woman to wear them. [197] The men do not have corns on the feet because they don't wear shoes. The women do not have corns on their feet because they don't wear shoes either, but they do have them around their ankles where the leggings end, because the leggings bind them [298] strongly there. To get rid of these they take the second bark of the hamàra which they slip under their leggings and this cures them. [87]

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10. Love and Learning

The Caribs have no knowledge of liberal arts or mechanical skills, not even having words to express them. However, they practice them to the extent that nature has given them knowledge, and necessity requires it. They do not know how to open a vein, but this does not mean that they are ignorant of drawing blood if they must. The instrument they use is neither a lancet nor scalpel, and they do not pierce the vein nor make a deep cut. Instead, they slightly scratch the skin with an instrument which they make from an agouti thigh bone which has an agouti tooth imbedded in one end and is tied with a cotton thread. They sharpen the tooth, and holding the handle pass lightly on the flesh and make scratches. Then they rub off the blood with oualloman straw. [196]

All of the Caribs are extremely melancholy, moody, and silent. They have appetites for odd foods as if they were pregnant women, eating chalk, or if they do not have it, eating earth. The women and children all do it, which make them dry and finally causes their death. I have always in my accounts mentioned their melancholy and the difficult nature of their language. It has been commonly said that the devil beats them. I have never seen nor heard of such a thing from the Caribs in all of the nineteen years I have spoken with them. The reason why such a statement has been made is twofold. Firstly, when lying on the left side their spleen is compressed by the left elbow. It sends black fumes to the brain which causes black and horrible dreams, as if they were at grips with maboyas or were being taken away by them. I have taken some of the Caribs in my arms when I saw them in such pains. I wiped off their sweat and carried them out of their hammocks, and they would have willingly fallen on their knees to thank me because I had protected them from the maboyas who were beating them. The second reason for the statement that the devil beats them is that at the slightest harm they suffer they say it is a spell or an evil given by maboyas or sorcerers. This does not mean that they have been beaten, but rather that they have been sent or given such evils through spells. [341]

The value of herbs is not unknown to the Caribs who collect them when they are sick in order to drink as medicine the juice which they draw out. Ordinarily the herbs are crushed between their hands and put into a pot full of water. They rub this mixture on the sick

person, whom they expose to the noonday sun, and let the medicine dry for a time. They know trees with great medicinal powers, and they peel off the second bark and crush it to press out the juice which they drink as a medicine. The women sometimes specialize so thoroughly in this profession that they are suspected of sorcery. They have killed certain women because of these suspicions, although one is never certain of the truth of these charges. [328]

The Caribs sometimes wear around their neck necklaces made of small, long calabashes as big as the finger, and filled with Mansfénix meat. Others wear bits of jaguar skin, claws of birds of prey, and other things which they wear as relics, especially at their feasts. At other times they always have some of these around their neck. I do not know whether this is out of superstition or to protect themselves from magic spells, or from an evil, or in the hope of becoming valiant. It seems they wear them for all these reasons and especially for the last two. [192] The Caribs when they are sick do not tolerate married people visiting them during their illness because they believe that their presence would impede their recovery. [365]

The chípiou tree has sap which is so bitter that it is used to designate all bitter things. If the Caribs handle its bark they communicate such a great bitterness to everything they touch that these things could not be used. They pound this bark, press out its juices and rub people with it who have yaws, that is to say, the great pox. I believe that it has some benefit against this evil. [160] They dry a reed, burn it, and rub the ashes on those who have yaws. The stems of the reed are used to lath roofs or enclose the walls of their houses. [351] Yaws is a natural disease which is as common in the islands as syphilis is in France. The Caribs cure themselves easily and without danger, not only because the temperature of the air is very even, but also because of the powerful remedies growing in the Torrid Zone. These remedies were taken by an 1,800 league voyage to France and lost their potency. They use the juice of chípiou bark which they rub on the outside, blacken themselves with Genipa juice, and use ashes of reeds. They take the juice of some vines like the mihi which is mixed with the grated back part of conch shell. When the big pimples burst they apply little tufts of raw cotton which binds the lesions and prevents deformity. But yaws are not very dangerous although common among

them, and all the above mentioned remedies heal without steam baths or mercury. Conversely, small pox which is very rare among them is very dangerous in the same way that the plague is for us in France. [478]

They believe that pains in the joints such as gout are caused by the boyes of South America and their gods. [426] They use a light-colored green stone as a remedy for kidney stones, to help women give birth, and for epilepsy. The women hang them around their neck like one of the most precious of their jewels. They receive them from the men who bring them from South America. There are also imitation green stones which have no value. [445] The riboúlichi is a true rush if one of its roots is crushed and absorbed in some liquor by a woman in childbirth;it makes the delivery easy, but if too much is taken the child will be harmed as has been actually seen. [439]

Ophthalmia is a common disease among the Caribs which appears almost every year, and is spread in the islands inhabited by the Caribs. It causes a fair number among them to be one-eyed. During the first five or six years this evil did not seem to approach the French, but now it makes its violence felt too often. [397] The Caribs purge themselves only when they are extremely sick. However, they only eat crabs, Lambis, bugaus, and some other poor nourishment which causes many boils. They pierce some boils with a ray's tail and squeeze the others to empty them. If the pus is such that it will not come out they take a hair which they dip into it and empty it. [340]

The chiboulelême is a common weed which the Caribs boil in water. They then use the broth to relieve themselves from constipation. [147] The Caribs shred the skin of the palm Christi and make a compress for the forehead as a remedy for headache. They heat the leaf and rub the afflicted part with it and receive relief. [25] Balium is a herb with a stench used as remedy against fever. [171]

When the Caribs rid themselves of chiggers they make a small cut with a fish bone or a sharp little splinter and press them between their nails and make them leave. They also use shark oil or porpoise oil to make them leave or urucu mixed with oil of couâbou. [148]

Herbs which cure the wounds made by poison arrows are called [illegible]. [476] To cure arrow wounds they use a palma Christi leaf which they warm on the fire and rub on the wound. According to Captain Baston one of his hosts had been hit in the heel by a poisoned

157 arrow and now and then he suffered from the old wound. It was favorably treated by this remedy. When the Caribs have a swelling on the arm they incise it with an agouti tooth and make it bleed. Then they take a big papaya and when it is half cooked in the ashes they apply it hot against the swelling to draw off the inflammation. [141]

221 The Caribs do not understand what happens when there is an eclipse and they say that the maboya has eaten the moon. They dance all the night and dare not stop once they have started. [370] They do not know the line of the equinox, but know very well when the sun passes and repasses its zenith, that is to say, straight above their head. [210] They have no clocks nor any knowledge of hours, [Pg 65] and when we say "What time is it?" they say "Where is the sun?" If it is nine o'clock they say "The sun is quite high." If it is afternoon they say "The sun turns." At four o'clock they say "It is not yet too late." [263] The Caribs have terms for "full moon," "zenith of the moon," "no more moon," "end of the moon," and "eclipsed moon" [163, 370], and "first day of the moon." [374] They count years by the passing of the Pleiades for they say, "How many Pleiades does your son have?" which means how old is he. [163] When the Caribs see some comet they say that it is a sign or warning for them. [88] [They know some planets, cf. 338, 431, 473; and some constellations, cf. 85, 163, 185, 186, 192, 194, 285, 289, 406, 421.--Editor]

282 The Caribs count up to five and no further. To express ten they say "all the fingers." If there is less they bend their fingers accordingly. If they wish to count up to twenty they open their fingers and then indicate their toes and say "fingers and toes." If they wish to count even more they say as many as hairs on the head or grains of sand on the seashore. [78] They have the names for only four colors: yellow, red, white, and black. [238]

003 The Caribs willingly brought me letters coming from Guadeloupe because they believed that these letters talked with me, and that I had a god as do their boyes who advised me about everything in these letters. This is because they did not yet grasp the meaning of our writing. [300]